PTA

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

COMMISSION TO STUDY SECONDARY SCHOOLS

REPORT ON PHASE II

February 18, 1982

COMMISSION TO STUDY SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Attachments:

A. List of Commission Members

B. News Release, 1/29/82 - Secondary Commission Sets Public Meetings

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In April, 1981, the Arlington School Board established a twenty-eight-person Commission[1] to Study Secondary Schools. The charge to the Commission is as follows:

> To conduct a comprehensive review of the secondary schools and to report to the School Board at the completion of each of the following phases of the review:
>
> Phase I. Findings (Problems and Opportunities)
>
> Phase II. Program Objectives (Desired Programs)
>
> Phase III. Alternatives for Meeting Objectives in the Future

Following the completion of Phase I, the Commission presented its initial report to the School Board on October 15, 1981. The Commission has now completed Phase II and is filing this second report.

To complete the work of Phase II, the Commission has met as a full body seven times. In addition, the Commission has held three public meetings hearing the views of approximately seventy citizens. By invitation, members of the Commission have attended sessions of the County Council of PTA's and the Advisory Council on Instruction. Finally, the Commission has received thirty written comments from citizens and groups expressing views.

The principal challenge of Phase II was to capture the individual Commission member's value judgments on the program objectives for the future and distill a consensus view. The Commission has accomplished this task and the collective views are set forth in Chapter II. In this regard, it should be noted that, as in Phase I, the Commission has assiduously avoided discussions concerning structural changes in the system electing first to focus on program objectives in the broadest sense. Thus, it has developed, reviewed, and commented on a wide range of variables that in its view can make a difference in the quality of education at the secondary level.

It will turn in Phase III to consider what, if any, changes are necessary in the system to deliver the services required to achieve desired quality objectives despite declining enrollment.

Chapter II of this Phase II report presents these program views; Chapter III provides a further analysis of data on the current school year in the form of certain current enrollment information and a description of the current situation dealing with the so-called singleton and other problems; Chapter IV concludes the report with a look ahead to the Commission's Phase III assignment and the balancing inherent in seeking to achieve the kind of secondary system identified in this report as the type Arlington wants in the foreseeable future.

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[1] On December 17, 1981, the Board, at the Commission's request, added two additional members, bringing the total membership to thirty.

CHAPTER II

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Introduction

It is clear from the Commission's hearings and deliberations that the Arlington community wants excellence in its secondary schools. It has become equally clear that a wide range of variables must be addressed as part of any decisions involving the makeup of the system which delivers it, and this the Commission has attempted to do.

To accomplish the task of identifying these variables the Commission adopted a procedure which allowed each member to set forth his/her own prerequisites for a secondary system. A master "must or want" list then was compiled and each member was given the opportunity to weight each entry on the list according to its perceived importance. The Commission went through this exercise twice and each time reviewed the items on the list receiving the lowest weighting. This review afforded Commission members the opportunity to discuss all low-weighted items before final decisions were made. It also permitted re-wording of items where that was deemed helpful and then voting to retain or reject the item in its restated form. The summary list set out below is the final product of that process.

Before turning to the summary, however, it is important to recognize that the list is not all inclusive. It simply represents what the Commission feels are certain key variables in a quality program for the future. In addition, no attempt was made to add in all of the legal requirements for secondary schools which may be dictated by current Arlington rules, the Standards of Quality, State School Board regulations and/or the laws and rules at the federal level. Thus, for example, special education is dealt with only in terms of meeting the needs of each student and through the expression of a view that it would be desirable to streamline the identification process.

Finally, it should be noted that the items are listed in the same general content areas described in our Phase I report: Course Offerings, Staffing, and Instruction; Extracurricular Activities; Facilities and Transportation; and, Student Services and Support.

Course Offerings, Staffing, and Instruction

Purpose and Goals of the Secondary Schools

Preparation for advanced education and/or employment are the primary goals of the secondary system.

For future Arlington secondary schools, the Commission envisions the following general policy commitments:

-- Arlington will maintain a comprehensive school system that is responsive to and satisfies the needs of an increasingly diverse school population.

-- Arlington schools will be large enough to provide a diversified program but small enough to permit maximum personalized attention.

-- Arlington's School Board will seek realistic budget funding to provide for a comprehensive secondary school system.

-- All Arlington secondary schools will maintain SACS accreditation.

-- Arlington will maintain a program that encourages students to continue their education after high school.

For the future Arlington secondary schools the Commission believes the community should view the Standards of Quality as minimum commitments and continue to emphasize and, when necessary improve:

-- skill building for all students to maximize the students' opportunity to function at levels that are both personally and socially rewarding;

-- development of skills and concepts in mathematics and the natural and social sciences;

-- a highly intensified reading program, established beginning at the primary level of elementary school in order to eventually improve the secondary students' reading levels;

-- attainment of proficiency in critical and objective thinking through more outside reading, written assignments, and class discussion;

-- acquisition of a marketable skill;

-- development of a value system and a sense of ethics;

-- an appreciation of visual and performing arts;

-- an inclusion of fine arts as part of the "basics".

Awareness of the potential trends in the '80s and '90s will, in the Commission's view, require the following commitments for our secondary system:

-- a commitment to prepare students for the occupational opportunities in the next two decades such as high technology, service industries, management, etc.

-- a recognition that "life-long" learning is going to be a growing community need and, therefore, public educational facilities in the years ahead must be available to meet this demand.

In short, the Commission sees a need for clear definition of the essentials in respect to instruction and a strong basics program requiring more than the completion of minimal objectives.

Requirements for Graduation --

The Commission supports increasing the minimum number of credits for graduation from eighteen to twenty. In addition, the Commission would increase the number of mandatory math credits from one to two.

The Commission also sees a need for the continuation of remediation programs to prepare students to meet minimum requirements for graduation but believes they should be subject to periodic review. The Commission feels that "required courses" must be provided in such a way as to give each student a reasonable opportunity to meet the requirements set forth. Finally, the existing policy to allow students to complete high school in three years should be continued.

Intermediate Schools --

The Commission believes that the special needs of the 7th and 8th grade student must be recognized and served. Whatever the delivery system, these students should be provided a/an:

-- strong academic program in English, mathematics, social studies and science that accommodates all students at their level of instruction;

-- strong and diverse exploratory program available to all students;

-- broad and diverse extracurricular program that involves the maximum number of students;

-- staff that understands the uniqueness of the 7th and 8th grade level student and is committed to working with this age group.

-- educational setting and a curriculum strategy that is appropriate for this age student's very rapidly changing intellectual, psychological, physiological and sociological growth patterns

The Commission's general views as to a comprehensive program pertain to this intermediate group as well. One specific in this regard is the Commission view that as a part of a comprehensive and rigorous elective program Spanish, French and Latin should be available as an option starting in the seventh grade.

Levels of Instruction --

Arlington schools should continue to offer differential programs of study to accommodate differences in learning. The Commission recommends maintaining and improving current practices. Given the current diversity in the makeup of the schools, there must be:

-- an emphasis on basic skills for students identified as deficient;

-- emphasis on "qualitatively" differentiated programs for students identified in special categories;

-- establishment of systematically and sequentially developed curricular offerings for gifted and talented students;

-- a strong adequately staffed HILT program; (In this regard for students with limited English proficiency, there must be a special program, i.e., "interpreters" to bridge the gap between school and home. Also in this area the Commission feels that there is merit in examining the unique and special needs of 16-21 year old non-English speaking refugees.)

-- continuation of the different levels of instruction to meet individual needs; (The Commission feels that limited opportunity for an AP, intensified or basic level course, because of "singletons" or "doubletons" should be avoided whenever possible.)

-- opportunities for special and alternative programs of education for Arlington students should be provided;

-- a continuing effort made to keep all students informed of the up-to-date options open to them (diversity of elective offerings, special in-school programs, adult education opportunities, college-level courses, career center programs, community opportunities, etc.);

-- access to any academic type program must not by design exclude students, e.g., a student may pursue a foreign language or a sequence of math courses without following a pure academic program;

-- a full opportunity must be provided gifted and talented students at each secondary school and the definitions and criteria for academically "gifted" and "talented" should not be the same.

Course Offerings --

As part and parcel of a future comprehensive program, the Commission feels the Arlington secondary system will have to have a comprehensive and rigorous elective program providing a wide range of choices for both college and non-college bound students and in general a strengthening of academic courses throughout the system, with specific targeting in math and science to improve the rigor of these courses and to meet the demands of an increasingly technological society. In this regard each curriculum area should have a clearly defined scope and sequence of content and skill; continuing efforts should be made to maintain achievement levels at or over ability levels; and, there should be an ongoing review of the Program of Studies to add or drop courses where appropriate.

In pinpointing a need for both a serious academic atmosphere and a comprehensive course of studies available, the Commission has singled out the following:

-- a strengthening of the fine arts program so every school will have a band, orchestra, chorus, and other singing groups;

-- an effort made to enhance the course offerings for the average or regular students by making program improvements in those areas;

-- an emphasis on increasing levels of complexity and abstraction in course content, rather than "more of the same", for students identified as bright or gifted;

-- inclusion of a wide range of team and individual sports opportunities as a part of the physical education program;

-- purposeful and efficiently run courses as part of Career Center program;

-- a strong vocational program with a variety of courses closely monitored by the business community;

-- an extended drug abuse control/drug education program in the schools supported by county agencies;

-- computer survey courses available in all high schools and a mini-unit available at intermediate levels;

-- a machine literacy program addressing computers, word processors, and telecommunications equipment available in all secondary schools, including the Career Center and from adult education;

-- budget flexibility to allow principals some discretion in organizing curriculum; (A few extra thousand dollars could make a significant difference in this regard.)

-- a standardization of grading practices, e.g., 90-100 = A, etc. throughout the secondary system.

-- continue curriculum standardization across the secondary schools.

Staffing, Staffing Policies --

The Commission envisions maintenance of a favorable pupil/teacher ratio both in budgeting and in practice -- particularly at larger schools because such a ratio is essential to effective teaching and learning.

In addition, the Commission favors a 20/1 ratio for remedial classes in summer school and, as is now the case, allowing classes with under fifteen pupils to "makeup".

In looking ahead, the Commission sees a need for working at improving classroom results. This will, in the Commission's view: call for hiring those most qualified for several course responsibilities; county established certification or in-service requirements for special programs which do not have specific state certification, e.g., HILT, G/T, remedial; working on criteria for effective teaching, including stressing in-service training featuring teacher effectiveness; strengthening teacher evaluation through evaluation by principals and experts in the discipline(s) with a cooperatively developed procedure appropriate to tasks performed as spelled out in the policy manual; and, the refinement of procedures to weed out incompetent teachers.

The Commission supports providing early retirement (full benefits) at age fifty-five with thirty years services; "travel" time allowances for split-location teachers; and, institution of new and meaningful ways of recognizing high teacher performance; and, more generous stipends provided to sponsors and coaches of major extracurricular activities.

The School Board should establish a firm policy that changes made to personnel policies should go into effect the next school year. Finally, the Commission feels that if we are to have excellence in a future secondary system, some important changes will have to be made in the RIF process and procedures. RIFs should be kept to a minimum. One obvious improvement would be to accelerate the budget preparation and approval process to reduce over-RIFing. The Commission suggests protection of a certain percentage of teachers in each building from RIFing. (Those protected could be sponsors, department chairmen, coaches, or especially effective teachers. The principal could decide.) In addition, outstanding effort --such as "master teacher" recognition or a willingness to be trained for specific

program responsibilities--should be rewarded by some increased protection from RIFing. In sum, seniority should not be the sole criterion for RIFing.

Student Conduct and Attendance --

The Commission feels that in a future Arlington secondary system we should maintain a student code of conduct that promotes a conducive atmosphere for both academic and social situations. An "academic atmosphere" and effective teaching are unreachable goals unless it is both policy and practice to suspend and/or expel students who do not meet behavioral or educational standards of performance. For instance, the high schools should not be required to perform purely custodial functions. The attempt to do so is harmful to the learning environment.

An acceptable student code would include, of course, the current controls on smoking and the use of alcohol or drugs on school property. It would also continue the policy banning "optional" absences from class and maintain current attendance policy with perhaps improved enforcement.

In this regard, the Commission sees a need to maintain the in-school suspension program, to work with teachers to help them manage their classroom in such a way as to improve student conduct, and to provide alternatives to students not satisfying discipline codes of a single school with the caveat that students who exhaust alternatives should be referred to county services.

Arrangements for Facilitating Delivery of Program --

Effective delivery of services which comprise a secondary school system involves attention to detail and innovation as improved delivery systems evolve. Part of this effort is communication and the Commission feels that frequent communication to parents on student performance should continue to be encouraged. More specifically, teacher-parent contacts, in addition to advisories, should be made between report cards, if needed. Another suggestion is that secondary students interested in a college preparatory course be given a model program of study before entering high school which would be updated annually.

Part of this effort is promoting a sense of equity. For example, the policy for determining class standing should be uniformly applied, e.g., extra credit for AP courses, etc., and qualifications for academic honor societies should be uniform at each of the high schools. A further example would be maintaining the policy that students desiring to take courses not offered within the school system do so at their own cost.

A part of the effort is better management policies. For example, it would facilitate the fall opening if the master schedule for each school were set by year-end for the following fall. This would enable specific teaching needs to be met before school starts. Also, class size in vocational courses needs to reflect state guidelines in order to maximize state funding.

In addition, delivery of services in the future demands attention to community involvement and a better utilization of community and regional resources, apprenticeships, area educational offerings, etc.

Extracurricular Activities

The Commission sees no lessening of the interest in a comprehensive extracurricular program in the future for Arlington secondary schools. A broad program meeting the needs and interests of students should be provided and promoted in the athletic and non-athletic areas. School spirit and parent and general community support at athletic and other extracurricular events are important ingredients in a successful secondary program. Continued participation in the Virginia High School League is also important.

The Commission's current concerns over the adequacy of the existing extracurricular program appear to signal the need for changes in a system for the future. These changes would include:

-- increased budget support, e.g., updated and more adequate equipment and safety protection, athletic trainers, more adequate stipends for sponsors and coaches, and more continuity in the funding of a basic program;

-- more attention to: meeting the needs of minorities; maintaining a "basic" or core program with a strengthened intramural program; and, improving communication, e.g., a catalog of offerings by school, to maximize participation and to ensure that the "essentials" are maintained. (As to the core program, the Commission sees each high school having a yearbook, newspaper, drama, instrumental and choral performing groups, honor societies, service clubs, student government, class organizations, an "It's Academic" team, drill team, and cheerleaders);

-- more attention to staffing: to ensure the offered activity is truly a safe and bona fide learning experience; to ensure that participating staff is involved in the planning of those activities; and, sponsorship of an activity or coaching is voluntary;

-- improved procedures to enhance student opportunities for athletic scholarships to colleges and universities.

Facilities and Transportation

The Commission sees the Arlington secondary school system staying with a policy that the transportation system must meet the needs of the students and programs offered but should not dictate the scheduling of such programs. Thus, building needs, field trips, extracurricular activities, and the like will dictate fleet size and operation. On the other hand, economy in operation can be pressed through contracts for taxis, vans, metrobus service, use of metrorail, etc.

The Commission expects that a future Arlington secondary school system will continue the policy that school buildings should be maintained and updated for function and safety. Community and handicapped needs must be considered in assuring that all buildings are adequate for future programs. (Indeed, community use of buildings should be encouraged.) As part and parcel of the "maintenance and update" policy, the Commission envisions the budget and other efforts made to see the buildings are clean, in good repair, adequately heated, and in as many cases as possible, air-conditioned. (For example, if a building is in use twelve months a year, air-conditioning should be required.) Each teaching station should include:

-- adequate space for the intended program;

-- adequate ventilation, heating and cooling;

-- proper lighting and light control for audio-visual preparation;

-- asbestos free environment;

-- privacy and security during instruction;

-- noise control;

-- adequate furniture (desk, chair, chalk board, student chairs, tables, desks, etc.);

-- facilities related to subject (i.e., sinks for art, tables, storage facilities, etc.);

-- a direct communications link to the office for safety;

-- unfettered access to contained space for instruction for each class in an open-space school;

-- unfettered access to instructional room by the teacher during planning time (including traveling specialists);

-- easy access to student restrooms;

-- safe emergency exits

Student Services and Support

In looking ahead, the Commission, of course, recognizes that a future Arlington secondary school system must be able to provide a wide range of special student services and support to the secondary schools and the staff and students in those schools. In reviewing the current scope of the supporting services program, the Commission recognizes that periodic examination or audit should be required to keep a proper balance between the support and the delivery systems.

As to specifics, the Commission would hope a future system might reflect the views set out below.

Pupil personnel services -- a simplified special education eligibility and assignment program with psychologists and visiting teachers having more time to provide direct service to all students; and, the use of psychometricians to facilitate the testing program;

Guidance -- under the current or improved guidance "planning factors", more emphasis on the positive aspects of contacts with students to provide a strong program to assist students/parents in making critical decisions as the student matures and changes;

Materials -- renewed attention to having: free books on hand at start of school year; funds for supplemental teaching materials; prompt delivery of supplies and materials for newly formed classes; updated equipment to meet the new technological demands; replacement cycles for all equipment used in the instructional program; and, an adequate library staff to provide research instruction.

Uniformity in textbooks should be encouraged as well as maintaining and enforcing fines for non-return of texts. Outdated texts and outdated equipment could be sold to students at low cost rather than discarded.

In short, the Commission feels that more attention must be paid to providing adequate teaching materials, supplies, equipment, and books. Teachers should not have to pay for essential materials and itinerant teachers should be provided with necessary materials at each location.

Library/Media Centers --

The Commission views the library/media centers as a central element of a secondary school. They should be maintained with adequate staff which should be no less than what is called for under current planning factors and ideally improved. There should be sufficient secretarial help as well.

The Commission sees the library role as multifaceted: providing research instruction; instructing in the use of A/V and video equipment; and maintaining a meaningful research and circulating library collection. Ideally, the libraries will have a good balance between print and non-print and serve students before school, after school, and during lunch.

Telecommunications --

The Commission envisions that telecommunications will become more and more important for the Arlington secondary system. The challenges ahead will include keeping equipment up to date and current with the state of the art. This will require adequate funds for repair and replacement funds. Also challenging will be using these resource and communication technologies to assist as many of the staff and students as possible.

Other Areas --

Other areas reviewed included human relations and the volunteer program. As to human relations, the Commission sees part of the future work load being more fully shared with personnel, specifically enforcement responsibility to affirmative action and Title IX. As to the volunteer program, the Commission would hope that the "grass roots" aspect, namely, local school and local community assumption of the responsibility will be encouraged.

CHAPTER III

THE ENROLLMENT OUTLOOK AND ITS IMPACT

Current and Future Enrollment

As indicated in the Commission's Phase I report, the Commission will be taking a closer look at Arlington's demographic trends and our enrollment outlook.

It appears necessary to look beyond the total numbers and into some of the underlying trends. One of the obvious areas of inquiry is a look at the changing makeup of the secondary school population.

Another, and more subjective, area of inquiry is the impact which changing demographics and declining enrollment are having in terms of curriculum.

Enrollment Decline and Demographic Shifts

Since 1978, the overall secondary student population has declined 9.5 percent, but the ethnic and racial subgroups making up the whole have shifted very differently.

.... The black secondary student population has declined by 14.3%.

.... The white secondary student population has declined by 19.3%.

.... The other minorities, basically Asians and Hispanics, identified in the Civil Rights Survey, have increased by 58.2%.

Chart I, attached, shows these shifts from year-to-year since 1978. If these same trends were to prevail for the next three years, we would have a total secondary school population of 7,123 comprised of 856 blacks (12.0%), 2,364 other minorities (33.2%), and 3,903 whites (54.8%) in 1984. Overall it would mean a decline of 2.8 percent (7,330 to 7,123) or about a one percent per year drop.

The school-by-school trends are shown in Charts II through IV. Obscuring the meaning of these data at least to a degree is the reality that certain programs such as High Intensity Language Training (HILT) and High Intensity Language Training Extended (HILTEX) are somewhat arbitrarily assigned to specific schools, thus raising the percentage of non-black minorities -- Asians and Hispanics -- in the particular school population. It also must be noted that busing of blacks is still required and this fact creates a "forced" distribution of blacks in Arlington secondary schools.

What seems most evident is that the non-black minorities, when combined, are overtaking blacks as the largest minority grouping in the system. If a goal were to spread all the minorities as evenly as possible through the system, Chart V shows the challenge which would confront the system. With one possible exception, there are no minority "balanced" secondary schools in our system.

For the Commission, these data pose a number of questions.

First, what are the likely trends in the future? Is the number of minorities

(Asians and Hispanics) going to continue to grow? Will this segment of the student population level off? Will it decline?

Second, assuming that the ideal situation would be ethnic and racial balance between schools, does the community want a major overhaul of school districts? Does the busing now imposed on certain black students make sense for the future in light of the declining numbers of blacks and the growth of the other minorities? Is geographic school assignment a must?

In short, the rapidly changing demographics not only alter the previously reliable survival rates for projecting enrollment, they raise a host of questions about needs in the future.

Two opposite scenarios make this point about uncertainty more clearly. First, we assume that the shifting population mix will continue. Chart VI, attached, shows the past ten year history for all Arlington schools (not only secondary schools).

With a continuing growth rate of about fifteen percent a year, the other minorities would have 5,805 students in the system in 1986. The white student population with an average eight percent decline over the past five years, would have only 5,475 in 1986 and the black student numbers would have declined to 1,947 with their current three percent per year drop. Overall, the system would have 13,227 showing only a ten percent drop from the current number. While this number would fit the Commission's two percent per year possibility, the system would likely have to meet very differing needs than those at the present.

A very different scenario would be that the other minorities have now peaked and in terms of enrollment will now decline at a ten percent per year rate. This would mean that in 1986 we would have 1,659 Hispanics and Asians along with 5,475 whites and 1,947 blacks, or 9,081 in the K-12 system, or about a six percent per year overall decline. The difference in impact as between these two forecasts is, of course, obvious.

In the weeks ahead we will probe further into some of the demographic factors that may influence the size and composition of Arlington's enrollment and include results in subsequent reports.

Impact on Curriculum

Traditionally, declining enrollment and its impact on curriculum has been measured by a series of related factors. These include:

-- the number of classes enrolling fewer than fifteen or over thirty students. (Since the secondary pupil/teacher ratio of 19.5/1 has been the same for many years, an increase in "small" and/or "large" classes signals a possible curriculum problem.);

-- the number of "combined" classes, i.e., two or more levels offered in a single class. (Traditionally, foreign language at the higher levels, e.g., IV-V or V-VI, have been combined so the indicator signals a problem as this phenomena spreads.);

-- the maintenance of a diversified array of electives. (Historically, art, music, and drama have been considered "core" electives, and the "depth" and "breadth" of these electives has been adversely affected by declining

enrollment. Other shifts can be reviewed as well: extracurricular courses becoming course electives, e.g., yearbook; and the small number of electives in English, social studies, mathematics, etc.);

-- the existence of sequences for the academically able. (Of prime concern here is the AP or intensified course offerings. As noted below, the problem is very much related to "singletons", i.e., courses offered only once a day which force rescheduling and, if severe enough, prevent a student from taking a desired four or six year course or sequence of study.);

-- the number of part-time teachers in a school. (All are agreed that a limited amount of movement by teachers is acceptable, particularly if it enables a school to offer certain advanced courses; however, as a general rule, it tends to have a negative impact on teacher effectiveness.);

-- the extent of "multi-preparations" being imposed on teachers. (Again, the issue is teacher effectiveness and the more courses a single teacher has to prepare to teach, the harder it is to respond fully to the needs of individual classes.)

-- the growing number of "singletons", i.e., courses offered only once a day. (This indicator is perhaps the key one from the parental standpoint because it imposes schedule changes and if pervasive enough, forces significant changes in a scheduled course of study at the secondary level -- 7-12.)

None of the above indicators has a built-in "danger" signal which automatically alerts one and all that a crisis point has been reached. This is the case because almost all of these indicators can signal a healthy as well as an unhealthy situation. For example, a teacher may have multi-preparations because he/she has taken on an elective that only a limited number of students want, e.g., Accounting II. "Singletons" may mean a wealth of electives are being offered, and so on. In short, the declining enrollment impact on the curriculum of secondary schools becomes very subjective.

Compounding this reality is the commitment to meet student needs; a "comprehensive" program is made up of a number of sub-programs (as noted in the Commission's Phase I report). Thus, total numbers mean relatively little because students' needs are not static and as the make-up of the schools change, programs shift significantly.

For example, ten percent of all secondary students are now diagnosed as having limited English proficiency and are enrolled in special English training courses, i.e., HILT, HILTEX. This ten percent rate for 1981-82 is double the rate for 1978-79. As shown in Chart VII, attached, this affects individual schools very differently because the special help programs have been assigned to selected schools although each of the regular schools has some students in this category.

By the same token, special education enrollments are increasing. In 1981-82, Arlington had over seven percent of the secondary school students enrolled in special education programs for at least a part of the school day. The available data displayed in Chart VIII again show an uneven impact from school to school, although certain self-contained programs are arbitrarily assigned to certain schools.

Singletons --

The breakdowns of students needing special help because of a language problem or a handicapping condition demonstrate clearly the "sub-set" reality confronting the secondary system. The existence of singletons is basically the same problem. If the course offered only once a day is of no particular interest to a given student, then

it presents no hurdle. Indeed, singletons are caused by various factors and can exist in a school with a growing student population. In Chart IX, attached, is a look at the high schools and the singleton situation in each of the departments.

These data reveal a number of observations:

-- mandated subjects have the highest enrollment and since four credits are required in English, the English Department has the highest enrollment;

-- looking at students enrolled in mandatory English courses (which includes accepted alternatives) the difference in enrollment among the three schools is relatively small - 184 students between the largest and smallest (actually cited enrollment shows a spread of 533 students between largest and smallest);

-- with the exception of foreign language, the departments offering purely elective courses serve under 500 pupils (viewed in this very narrow context, our high schools are not large).[1]

Intermediate schools with far fewer electives show somewhat similar patterns. More refined data breakdowns are possible. However, since there is no "crisis" point, it suffices to say that some "core" electives, i.e., art, drama and music, are serving relatively few students and thus, have a high number of singletons; if a department offering electives attempts to offer "depth" and "breadth", it will present a "singleton" problem to students; Latin and German also present a scheduling problem for students; required courses with a three-level approach -- basic, regular, and intensified or AP -- are not immune from the singleton phenomenon; the mandatory areas are affected much less than the elective offerings; and, the higher level students, e.g., 11th and 12th grade, have the most problems with "singletons".[2]

In sum, the system has a number of indicators, such as singletons, but the fact that they show certain "negatives" leaves us only with some highly subjective answers to the critical questions which include:

-- How long can we continue to experience declining enrollment before it will be "necessary" to reorganize the secondary system?

-- What kinds of "interim" steps might be in order to address key problems?

-- Will a failure to act lead to a lessening in quality of system and promote further decline?

If the community wants a broad array of electives for the college and non-college bound student, then a diminishing system becomes less and less responsive. Given the lack of certainty as to enrollment prospects, i.e., the wide range of two to six percent decline, and the unknowns as to the "sub-set" enrollment, the challenge to the Commission is to look at the kind of system Arlington wants as we have done in Chapter II and in Phase III review the best options to achieve this goal. Timing as to change may be largely a best guess.

We conclude this report with a look at the Phase III challenge.

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[1] Trends are very important in this area but data for past years are not readily available.

[2] See Chart X showing 11th grade hypothetical schedules for 1981.

CHART I

SECONDARY SCHOOLS CIVIL RIGHTS SURVEY DATA: 1978-1981*

	Year and Percent of Total*							
SURVEY GROUP	1978**		1979		1980		1981	
Black	1,166	(14.4)	1,116	(14.6)	1,029	(13.9)	999	(13.6)
Other Minorities	944	(11.7)	1,031	(13.5)	1,249	(16.9)	1,494	(20.4)
White	5,992	(74.0)	5,497	(71.8)	5,110	(69.2)	4,837	(66.0)
TOTALS	8,102		7,654		7,388		7,330	

*Percentages may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding.

**1978 represents the year the last secondary school consolidation took place; schools in the survey data include Page, Jefferson, Kenmore, Swanson, Williamsburg, H-B Woodlawn, Wakefield, Washington-Lee and Yorktown.

SOURCE: Office of Planning and Assessment, Arlington Public Schools

CHART II

TRENDS IN BLACK ENROLLMENT - 1978-1981

Secondary Schools	1978 No (%)	1979 No (%)	1980 No (%)	1981 No (%)
Page	32 (13.0%)	28 (9.4%)	26 (7.0%)	21 (5.6%)
Jefferson	105 (17.2)	115 (22.1)	122 (27.1)	112 (21.4)
Kenmore	109 (17.7)	105 (17.2)	120 (18.3)	108 (17.1)
Swanson	61 (12.0)	76 (13.9)	71 (13.6)	61 (11.4)
Williamsburg	86 (16.3)	82 (17.0)	86 (17.6)	72 (15.2)
H-B Woodlawn	8 (2.1)	16 (4.1)	8 (2.1)	13 (3.6)
Wakefield	398 (22.6)	372 (21.3)	326 (19.4)	344 (20.3)
Washington-Lee	192 (10.1)	175 (10.5)	154 (9.8)	153 (9.8)
Yorktown	175 (11.3)	147 (10.5)	116 (9.2)	115 (9.9)
Totals	1,166 (14.4)	1,116 (14.6)	1,029 (13.9)	999 (13.6)
Percent decline (-)	-	-4.3%	-7.8%	-2.9%

SOURCE: Office of Planning and Assessment
Arlington Public Schools

CHART III

TRENDS IN WHITE ENROLLMENT - 1978-1981

Secondary Schools	1978 No (%)	1979 No (%)	1980 No (%)	1981 No (%)
Page	196 (79.3)	249 (83.8)	319 (85.3)	326 (87.4)
Jefferson	400 (65.7)	308 (59.1)	241 (53.4)	275 (52.5)
Kenmore	366 (59.6)	344 (56.4)	305 (46.6)	291 (46.1)
Swanson	396 (78.2)	408 (75.0)	407 (77.8)	414 (77.4)
Williamsburg	420 (79.4)	376 (78.2)	386 (78.8)	372 (78.5)
H-B Woodlawn	352 (93.6)	359 (91.6)	360 (93.2)	334 (91.5)
Wakefield	1093 (62.2)	1022 (58.5)	907 (54.0)	810 (47.8)
Washington-Lee	1453 (76.2)	1248 (75.0)	1112 (70.6)	1029 (65.7)
Yorktown	1316 (84.6)	1183 (84.5)	1072 (85.6)	986 (84.7)
Totals	5992 (74.0)	5497 (71.8)	5110 (69.2)	4837 (66.0)
Percent decline (-)	-	-8.3%	-7.0%	-5.3%

SOURCE: Office of Planning and Assessment
Arlington Public Schools

CHART IV

TRENDS IN "OTHER" MINORITY ENROLLMENT - 1978-1981

Secondary Schools	1978 No (%)	1979 No (%)	1980 No (%)	1981 No (%)
Page	19 (7.7)	20 (6.7)	29 (7.8)	26 (7.0)
Jefferson	104 (17.1)	98 (18.8)	88 (19.5)	137 (26.1)
Kenmore	139 (22.6)	161 (26.4)	230 (35.1)	233 (36.9)
Swanson	50 (9.9)	60 (11.0)	45 (8.6)	60 (11.2)
Williamsburg	23 (4.3)	23 (4.8)	18 (3.7)	30 (6.3)
H-B Woodlawn	16 (.43)	17 (4.3)	18 (4.7)	18 (4.9)
Wakefield	267 (15.2)	342 (19.6)	446 (26.6)	542 (32.0)
Washington-Lee	263 (13.8)	240 (14.4)	310 (19.7)	385 (24.6)
Yorktown	63 (4.1)	70 (5.0)	65 (5.2)	63 (5.4)
Totals	944 (11.7)	1031 (13.5)	1249 (16.9)	1494 (20.4)
Percent increase (+)	-	+9.2%	+21.1%	+19.6%

SOURCE: Office of Planning and Assessment
Arlington Public Schools

CHART V

± PERCENTAGES

Over/Under Averages

Secondary School	Black (13.6%)	Other Minorities (20.4%)	White (66.0%)
Page (1-7)	-8.0%	-13.4%	+21.4%
Jefferson (7-8)	+7.8%	+ 5.7%	-13.5%
Kenmore (7-8)	+3.5%	+16.4%	-19.9%
Swanson (7-8)	-2.2%	- 9.2%	+11.4%
Williamsburg (7-8)	+1.6%	-14.2%	+12.5%
H-B Woodlawn (7-12)	-10.0%	-15.5%	+25.5%
Wakefield (9-12)	+ 6.7%	+11.5%	-18.2%
Washington-Lee (9-12)	- 3.8%	+ 4.1%	- 0.3%
Yorktown (9-12)	- 3.7%	-15.0%	+18.7%

SOURCE: Office of Planning and Assessment
Arlington Public Schools

CHART VI

"OTHER MINORITIES" - TEN YEAR HISTORY

YEAR	ASIAN/PACIFIC	HISPANIC	COMBINE	PERCENT OF STUDENT POPULATION
1981	2,102	1,215	3,317	22.5%
1980	1,773	1,071	2,844	18.8%
1979	1,477	1,024	2,501	15.5%
1978	1,432	949	2,381	14.0%
1977	1,460	1,038	2,498	13.5%
1976	1,329	942	2,271	12.0%
1975	1,202	779	1,981	10.1%
1974	780	758	1,538	7.5%
1973	741	718	1,459	6.9%
1972	521	674	1,195	5.5%

SOURCE: Office of Planning and Assessment
Arlington Public Schools

CHART VII

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY STUDENTS (LEPs) IN ARLINGTON SECONDARY SCHOOLS RECEIVING SPECIAL HELP: 1981

SCHOOL	No. of LEPs Taking Special Courses	% of Total Enrollment	No. of LEPs by School District
Page (7)	0	0	0
Jefferson	55	10%	76
Kenmore	187	30%	120
Swanson	0	0	38
Williamsburg	0	0	8
H-B Woodlawn (7-12)	0	0	0
Wakefield	284	17%	285
Washington-Lee	155	10%	144
Yorktown	0	0	10
	681	10%	681

SOURCE: Office of Planning and Assessment, Arlington Public Schools

CHART VIII

STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS BY SCHOOL - OCTOBER 23, 1981

SCHOOL	No. of Students in Special Ed Programs	Percentage of Total
Page (7)	1	2%
Jefferson	52	10%
Kenmore	46	7%
Swanson	65	12%
Williamsburg	55	12%
H-B Woodlawn	10	3%
Wakefield	136	8%
Washington-Lee	89	6%
Yorktown	68	6%
	522	7%

SOURCE: Office of Planning and Assessment
Arlington Public Schools

CHART IX

THE ARLINGTON HIGH SCHOOLS - 1981-82

Subject by Department[1]	Wakefield (No. of Students[2] --	Washington-Lee No. of Sections --	Yorktown Singletons[3])
Art	97 - 4 - 2	127 - 10 - 4[4]	122 - 5 - 5
Business	473 - 19 - 7	545 - 24 - 5	
Drivers Ed	108 - 7 - N/A	126 - 7 - N/A	103 - 6 - N/A
English*			
--Required	1297 - 56 - 4	1288 - 55 - 2[4]	1113 - 44 - 5
--Drama	39 - 2 - 2	71 - 3 - 2	28 - 1 - 1
--Yearbook and Other Electives	16 - 1 - 1	97 - 5 - 3	50 - 2 - 2
Foreign Language			
--French	197 - 9 - 1	230 - 11 - 1	237 - 11 - 1
--German	36 - 2 - 2	57 - 2 - 2	57 - 4 - 4
--Latin	99 - 5 - 1	59 - 3 - 3	109 - 5 - 1
--Spanish	171 - 8 - 2	194 - 9 - 1	234 - 10 - 2
Home Ec	189 - 9 - 3	107 - 5 - 0	139 - 8 - 3
Industrial Arts	495 - 25 - 6	299 - 18 - 5	266 - 17 - 5
Marketing Ed	88 - 6 - 2	82 - 8 - 5	66 - 8 - 3
Math*	1249 - 55 - 5	1157 - 50 - 3	936 - 41 - 3
Music	161 - 5 - 5	248 - 9 - 7[4]	156 - 5 - 5
Science*	710 - 30 - 4	725 - 32 - 3	659 - 30 - 4
Social Studies*			
--Required	1170 - 48 - 1	1094 - 40 - 2	896 - 35 - 4
--Other	115 - 5 - 0	82 - 3 - 0	190 - 7 - 0
Special Ed	299 - 44 - N/A	252 - 36 - N/A	103 - 18 - N/A
HILT/HILT-X	1118 - 42 - N/A	573 - 20 - N/A	--

*Areas with mandatory requirements.

[1]Does not include Health/PE nor Career Center students.

[2]Students may be counted more than once if enrolled in more than one class in subject area.

[3]Singletons may include combined classes.

[4]Includes two sections of Art-English-Music.

SOURCE: October Master Schedules, Arlington Public Schools

CHART X

1981 AND SOME HYPOTHETICAL SCHEDULING PROBLEMS

Sample Programs For Three 11th Graders[1]

A. College Bound -- Bright or Gifted Student

1 English II, AP I*
2 Math AP II*
3 French IV*
4 Chem Study
5 Va. & U. S. History
6 Economics**

*All could be singletons

**Possible singleton or not available

Likelihood of This Schedule Being Available is Remote at Any of Three Regular High Schools

B. Career and/or College Bound Student, i.e., Student Who Wants Both Options Available Upon Graduation

1 English II
2 Algebra II
3 Va. & U. S. History
4 Business Law*
5 Shorthand**
6 Accounting II*

*Likely singletons

**"Doubleton" at best

Schedule Possible but Likelihood of Conflicts High

C. Vocational Student

1 English II
2 Geometry
3 U. S. & Va. History
4 Commercial Art I*
5 " "
6 " "

} Three Period Course at Career Center

*Offered only first three periods at Career Center

Schedule Would Appear Possible

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[1]The more singletons a student would like to schedule the less likely his/her preferred schedule will make up. (Restated, one or two singletons may not be a problem but three or four is likely to be one.)

CHAPTER IV

PHASE III: ALTERNATIVES FOR MEETING OBJECTIVES IN THE FUTURE

The Commission's views as to desired programs can be summarized in a number of different ways. Perhaps, most simply, the Commission is stating that the community wants quality programs that allow all students the opportunity to achieve to the fullest extent. Quality and opportunity are seen as twin and inseparable goals. Further, the Commission has high expectations as to what our secondary system can achieve in meeting the needs of students, due to its achievements in the past.

In more practical terms, these objectives dictate a comprehensive program, proper educational environment, well defined instructional objectives, and effective delivery and management of these instructional and extracurricular programs. To meet these objectives will, of course, be an on-going challenge. In Phase III, the Commission will be exploring the organizational alternatives that will permit these goals to be reached.

It is readily apparent that the objectives identified by the Commission do not per se make obvious a particular organizational format. But the goals do limit the alternatives. Specifically, it is unlikely that doing nothing will help Arlington's secondary schools reach the identified goals since declining enrollment is eroding the comprehensive program. By the same token, simply reshuffling students to fully occupy buildings and thus create surplus facilities will only meet the goals by happenstance or coincidence.

Among the key factors to be considered in looking at the alternative organizational arrangement will be the following:

-- "adequate" size, i.e., building enrollment, is a function of the programs to be offered or more specifically the number of students with similar needs (such as remediation, language training (HILT), and special education) and similar interests, values and educational preferences (such as vocational training and/or college/advanced education preparation);

-- maintenance of a broad-based extracurricular program, extensive elective offerings, and effective delivery of the instructional programs dictate the need for clustering sufficient numbers of students with similar interests, values, and preferences;

-- increased academic rigor and teacher effectiveness, more attention to mastery of basic skills and concepts, and improvements in the academic climate appear to demand more definition in the goals of each of the secondary schools with a consequent heightened commitment on the part of the teachers and students involved;

-- concerted efforts to meet student needs will require clearly defined choices with full system support in the commitment of adequate resources.

The Commission's task in Phase III, to identify "alternatives for meeting objectives in the future" is very challenging because the restructuring goal has become

one of offering programs as good or better than now exist. While extensive organizational latitude exists to meet this goal, the assignment will not be easy. To assist us in our deliberations, the Commission is planning more public meetings and special sessions with important constituencies within the community. We also are inviting several experts to help us make more informed judgments as to the alternatives.

We are on schedule and will be reporting to the School Board at the end of Phase III during May 1982. As noted earlier, we also will report further as the situation dictates in connection with further fact-finding efforts.